

# Appraising Scientists And Their Jobs

RICHARD W. BUNCH

**I**N THE INTEREST of properly appraising the scientists in its employ, the Bureau of State Services, Public Health Service, has devised a system for reviewing research and development positions.

Anyone who has had experience in grading research positions has faced the problem of finding criteria for measuring the quality of performance, a factor which materially affects the grade of the position.

The usual standards of job evaluation and measures of workload and accomplishment may be difficult to apply. The number of the scientist's publications may be quite misleading because years of preliminary unpublished trials may precede consequential results. The scientist is inclined to believe that a position classifier not trained in his specialty cannot satisfactorily evaluate his job. These considerations caused the Bureau of State Services to seek a better method of classifying scientists.

The Bureau uses scientists of many professions and disciplines in helping States and communities prevent and control disease and maintain health. Its programs include control of venereal disease, tuberculosis, and other communicable diseases; heart disease; chronic illness and aging; dental public health; air pollution control; water supply and water pollution control; milk and food sanitation; radiological health; and international health. Often its scientific personnel, by the nature of their jobs, are isolated from colleagues or supervisors trained in the same disciplines.

To enhance the job status of these men and women, the Bureau in 1955 formed the Committee for Review and Evaluation of Research and Development Positions to appraise, within the framework of civil service regulations, individual scientists and their achievements. The

committee's reviews, repeated at intervals of approximately 2 years, cover all scientists in grades GS-11 and above in research and development positions.

Basic to the committee's evaluations is the concept that, in determining the proper grade and salary of such positions, it is difficult to separate the job and the incumbent. The scientist's background, experience, professional capabilities, and achievements cannot be disregarded. In research and development work, the individual tends to create the level of his assignment by the quality of his research contributions. The grading of such positions must necessarily be related to the qualifications the individual brings to the position as well as to the nature of his duties and responsibilities.

A scientist's peers, who are themselves leaders in a field, can best evaluate his work, the committee believed. Consequently, panels of 3 or 4 peers from Public Health Service bureaus, other Government agencies, universities, and private industry have been appointed to work with the committee. The committee, with the help of these panels, applies standards used in governmental and nongovernmental positions to classify salaries and recognize scientific achievement.

Within the Bureau, the committee and its various panels of specialists have reviewed approximately 150 positions, covering all civil service scientists engaged in research and development activities. These included 32 in bacteriology-microbiology, 24 in other biological sciences, 37 in chemistry, 39 in statistics, 12 in behavioral sciences, and 6 exempt positions as provided in the Public Health Service Act, section 208 (g).

In addition to recommendations on the pay levels and classification of individual scientists, these reviews have yielded valuable counsel on better utilization of scientific skills and the need for special training and changes in assignment to round out professional experience.

The committee's recommendations and supporting statements from the panels of professional peers provide the Bureau and division chiefs with an adequate evaluation of the contributions of staff members whose professional training may have differed from their supervisor's. And for the first time, scientists have

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*Mr. Bunch is executive officer, Bureau of State Services, Public Health Service.*

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## Committee Members

Members of the Committee for Review and Evaluation of Research and Development Positions are Dr. Frederick J. Brady, program officer, Bureau of State Services, chairman; Dr. George H. Bradley, assistant chief, Communicable Disease Center; Dr. Keith H. Lewis, chief, Milk and Food Research Program, Robert A. Taft Sanitary Engineering Center; and Dr. Herbert E. Stokinger, chief toxicologist, Occupational Health Branch, Division of

Special Health Services. H. N. Meng, Division of Personnel, Office of the Surgeon General, serves as the committee's technical adviser; Lambert G. Longen, Executive Office, and Harold F. Eisele, Program Office, Bureau of State Services, are its staff assistants. Dr. John C. Cutler served as chairman prior to his transfer to the National Institutes of Health as assistant director, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

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their work reviewed comprehensively by members of their own scientific discipline.

The results of the Survey of Attitudes of Scientists and Engineers in Government and Industry, conducted by the Committee on Engineers and Scientists for Federal Government Programs, may reflect significantly the Bureau's reviews. The survey found that 65 percent of the scientists in the Bureau were satisfied with their job classification, as compared with 52 percent of those queried

throughout the Federal Government. Fifty percent of the Bureau scientists, and only 37 percent of the entire Government, believed their positions offered sufficient opportunity for salary advancement.

The Bureau's system has strengthened its scientific research and development, provided program administrators with classification and utilization reviews suited to their organization, and assured the scientist of a technically broad appraisal of his job.

## Research Grant for National Library of Medicine

The Council of Library Resources has granted the National Library of Medicine \$73,800 to study methods of improving bibliographic services through the use of mechanical equipment.

The primary aim of this research project will be to develop improved methods for the rapid and efficient publication of comprehensive periodical literature indexes in broad subject fields.

To accomplish this goal, new composition techniques based on an integration of photographic and data-processing equipment will be investigated.

If the project is successful, the resultant changes in format and manuscript preparation will be adopted with the 1960 issues of the *Current List of Medical Literature*.